

Sunnyside gets a taste of Shakespeare

The Hip to Hip Theatre Company presented its version of *Hamlet* at Sunnyside Gardens Park on Friday.



Hundreds braved warm temperatures and mosquitoes to view the evening performance—which was a homecoming for the troupe, founded in Sunnyside in 2007.

“This is a home venue for us,” said Jason Marr, a Sunnysider who founded the theater company with his wife Joy. “We’re playing for our family and all our friends.”

Many in the audience came prepared with blankets and folding chairs. Some brought dinner, while others took advantage of food and beverages sold by Queens Kickshaw of Astoria.

John and Jill O’Sullivan arrived with deluxe folding lounges and a basket of snacks and wine. “It’s almost better than our living room. We look forward to this every year,” said John, while his wife went off to find her friends from work.

On Friday, Hip to Hip performed an abridged version of *Hamlet* that lasted about 110 minutes with an intermission added. “That’s for the kids,” said Marr. “We don’t want them to grow restless.”

This is the sixth summer that the company has performed Shakespeare in Sunnyside. The group is currently performing at 12 venues, mostly in Queens. In addition to *Hamlet*, it is also presenting *Comedy of Errors*. That production will take place in Sunnyside Gardens Park next Friday, August 10th.

These outdoor productions are not as easy as they seem, explained stage manager Michael Griffiths. “There are a lot of challenges that are beyond our control,” he said, adding that “the audio drops out on the wireless microphones and that can be because of radio traffic from LaGuardia Airport.”

The noise from landing aircraft, the Long Island Railroad and a Mr. Softee truck did create some distractions. As for the mosquitoes, Griffiths said, “It’s not so bad. We’ve done Central Park after a rain storm — now that’s bad.”